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THE ROMAN EMPIRE



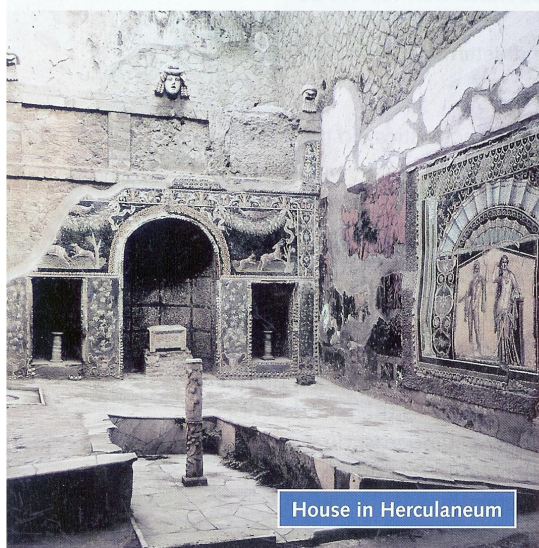
Rome was a city on the Italian Peninsula. In the 6th century BC, the people expelled their kings and the city became a **republic**.

In the next centuries, Rome conquered territory all over the Mediterranean and became an **empire**.

The Romans built cities, bridges and roads, and spread their language and culture throughout the Empire.

In the 3rd century AD, the Empire experienced a crisis and was divided into two territories: the **Western Roman Empire** and the **Eastern Roman Empire**.

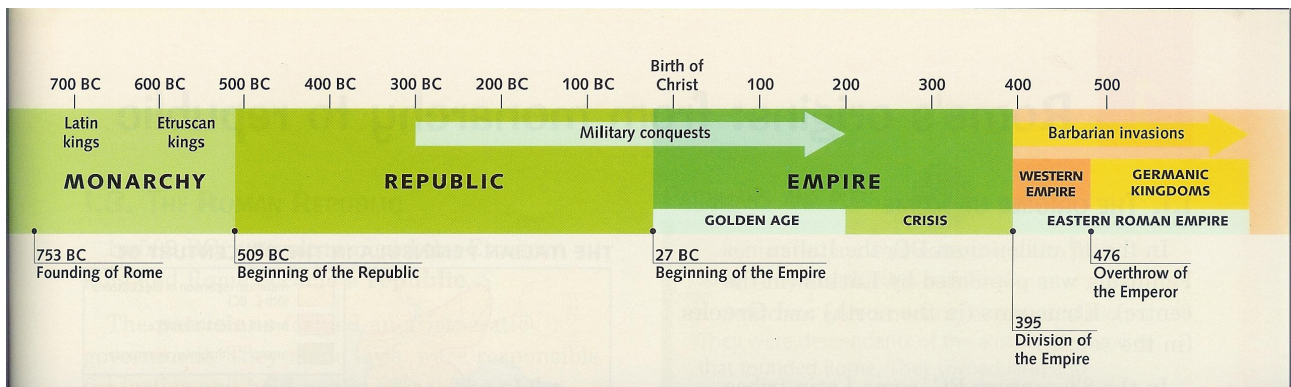
Barbarian peoples invaded the Western Empire and it disappeared. The Eastern Empire survived for another century as the **Byzantine Empire**.



- Where was Rome?
- What types of government did Rome have?
- What territories did Rome conquer?
- How was the Roman Empire later divided?

WORDS FOR THIS UNIT

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------|------------|
| • patrician | • plebs | • Senate |
| • assemblies | • legion | • villa |
| • emperor | • Romanisation | • freedmen |



The Colosseum in Rome

1

Rome's origins: from monarchy to republic

1.1. THE ORIGINS OF ROME

In the 1st millennium BC, the Italian Peninsula was populated by **Latins** (in the centre), **Etruscans** (in the north) and **Greeks** (in the south).

In the 8th century BC, some Latin tribes settled in an area surrounded by seven hills on the banks of the Tiber River. They built villages which developed into the city of **Rome**.

- a** Which peoples lived on the Italian Peninsula in the 1st millennium BC?

1.2. THE MONARCHY

Rome began as a monarchy. The **king** had absolute power. He was responsible for justice, the army and religion. The **Senate** was made up of patricians (members of aristocratic families) and helped the king to govern.

Rome had **seven kings**: the first four were Latin and the last three were Etruscan. Rome grew as new bridges and aqueducts were built. The city had the first sewerage system, the **Cloaca Maxima**, and a wall also was built around the seven hills.

- b** How many kings did Rome have?

ROMULUS AND REMUS

Romulus and Remus are the central characters in the legend of Rome's origin. In the legend, Romulus and Remus were the twin sons of the god Mars. When the twins were born, they were abandoned in the Tiber River. A wolf saved them by suckling them. They were later found and raised by a shepherd and his wife.

As adults, they founded the city of Rome. In 753 BC, Romulus had a fight with Remus and killed him. Romulus became the first king of Rome. In Roman tradition, 753 BC marked the beginning of the city's history.

- Did Romulus and Remus really exist?

THE ITALIAN PENINSULA IN THE 8TH CENTURY BC



- 1** Which of the Italian peoples founded Rome in the 8th century BC?
- 2** Where were the Greek colonies located? Where was the Carthaginian territory?



Sculpture of the Capitoline Wolf with Romulus and Remus.

- 1** Describe the sculpture and explain the legend that it shows.

1.3. THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

In 509 BC, a revolt removed the Etruscan king and Rome became a **republic**.

The **patricians** formed an aristocratic government. They made laws, were responsible for justice and held public office. The **plebs** paid taxes and served in the army.

In the 5th century BC, the plebs demanded the right to elect officials to represent their interests. These were the **Plebeian Tribunes**.

Later, the **Law of the Twelve Tables** established Roman law and the plebs gained the right to marry patricians and hold public office.

The institutions of the Republic

- The Republic had three main institutions:
- The **assemblies**: a group of citizens who voted on laws and chose magistrates.
- The **magistrates**: they governed the city. The consuls were the most important magistrates.
- The **Senate**: it ratified laws approved in the assemblies. The senate was also in charge of foreign policy and finance. It was made up of 300 former magistrates.

Rome was still not a democracy. Only wealthy, well-respected citizens could obtain important positions.

- c** When did Rome become a republic?
- d** What were the main institutions of the Republic?

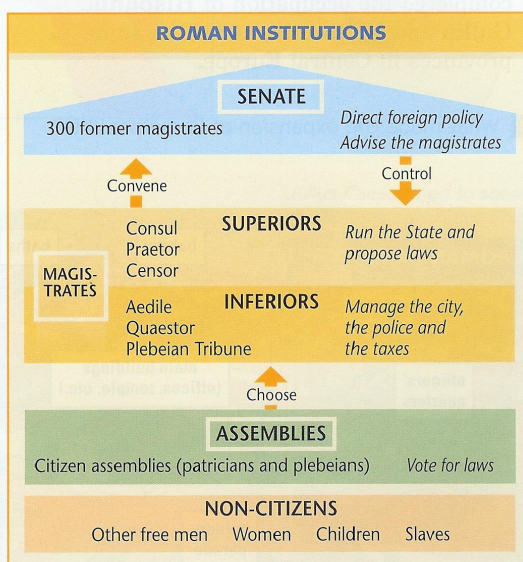
PATRICIANS AND PLEBS

Roman citizens were divided into two main social groups: patricians and plebs.

Patricians were a minority of the population. They were descendants of the aristocratic families that founded Rome. They owned land and livestock and governed the city.

Plebs were the majority of the population. They included anyone who had arrived in the city after its founding. Plebs were peasants, artisans and traders who had no property or political rights.

- What were the differences between patricians and plebs?



ACTIVITIES

- 1 What is the traditional date for the start of Roman history? According to legend, who founded the city?
- 2 What powers did the king have during the period of monarchy?
- 3 Who initially made up the Roman Senate? What about during the Republic?
- 4 What did the assemblies do in the Republic? What about the magistrates and the Senate?
- 5 Answer true (T) or false (F). Correct the false sentences.
 - a) The Plebeian Tribune represented the interests of the whole population.
 - b) The Roman Republic was a democracy.

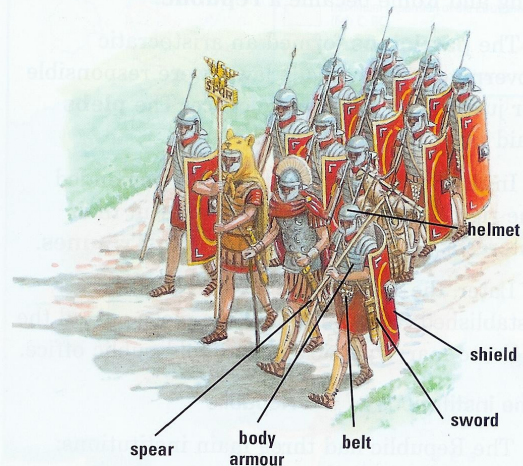
Rome's conquest of the Mediterranean

2.1. THE EXPANSION OF ROME

Rome conquered many territories using its wealth and large, efficient army. The Roman conquests can be divided into three periods:

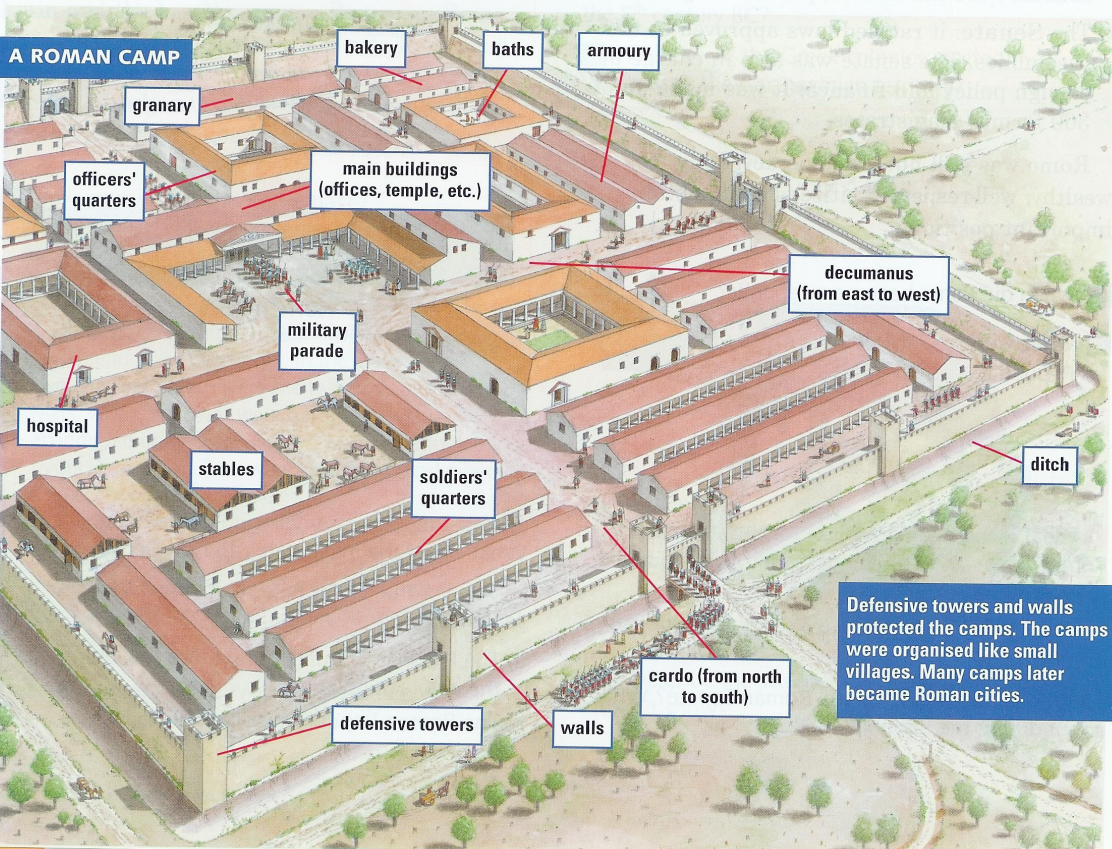
- Between 500 and 250 BC, Rome conquered the **Italian Peninsula**.
- Between 264 and 146 BC, Rome was at war with Carthage, a North African city with a lot of influence in the Mediterranean. The conflicts between the two cities are known as the **Punic Wars**. Rome won and gained control over the **Western Mediterranean**.
- Between the 2nd century BC and the 2nd century AD, the Romans conquered **Greece** and the **Eastern Mediterranean**. They also completed the occupation of **Hispania**, **Gallia** and **Britannia**, as well as some provinces in Central Europe.

THE ROMAN ARMY



The Roman army was organised into legions. Legions were divided into centurias (groups of up to 100 men).

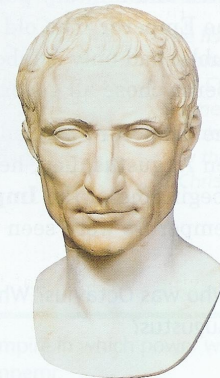
a What made the expansion of Rome possible?



ROMAN CONQUESTS



1 Identify the periods of Roman expansion and name the territories they conquered.



Julius Caesar tried to solve the crisis of the Republic by concentrating all political and military power in himself. He created Roman colonies in the provinces for the poorest Roman citizens to live in.

2.2. THE CRISIS OF THE REPUBLIC

At the end of the 1st century BC, the Republic experienced a crisis. The government had been created to rule a city, not an extensive empire.

There was much **social inequality**. Frequent conflicts made some people rich, but many peasants lost their land when they had to go to war.

This inequality produced social unrest. It led to the rise of the **Gracchi brothers**, who wanted a fairer distribution of wealth.

The crisis also forced the Senate and the magistrates to give power to military commanders (**dictators**). These commanders began fighting each other, causing **civil wars**.

One commander, **Julius Caesar**, made himself dictator and gave himself absolute power. However, he was assassinated by supporters of the Republic in 44 BC.

b What caused social unrest in the Empire?

LOOK

at the pictures of the Roman camp and the army

- 1 What was the Roman army like?
- 2 How were the soldiers organised?
- 3 What was a Roman camp like?

ACTIVITIES

- 4 Which territories did the Romans conquer during the expansion? Describe the social inequality in the new Roman territories.
- 5 What caused the crisis in the Republic? What were the results of the crisis?
- 6 What did Julius Caesar do?

3

The Roman Empire of the Mediterranean

3.1. AUGUSTUS AND THE EMPIRE

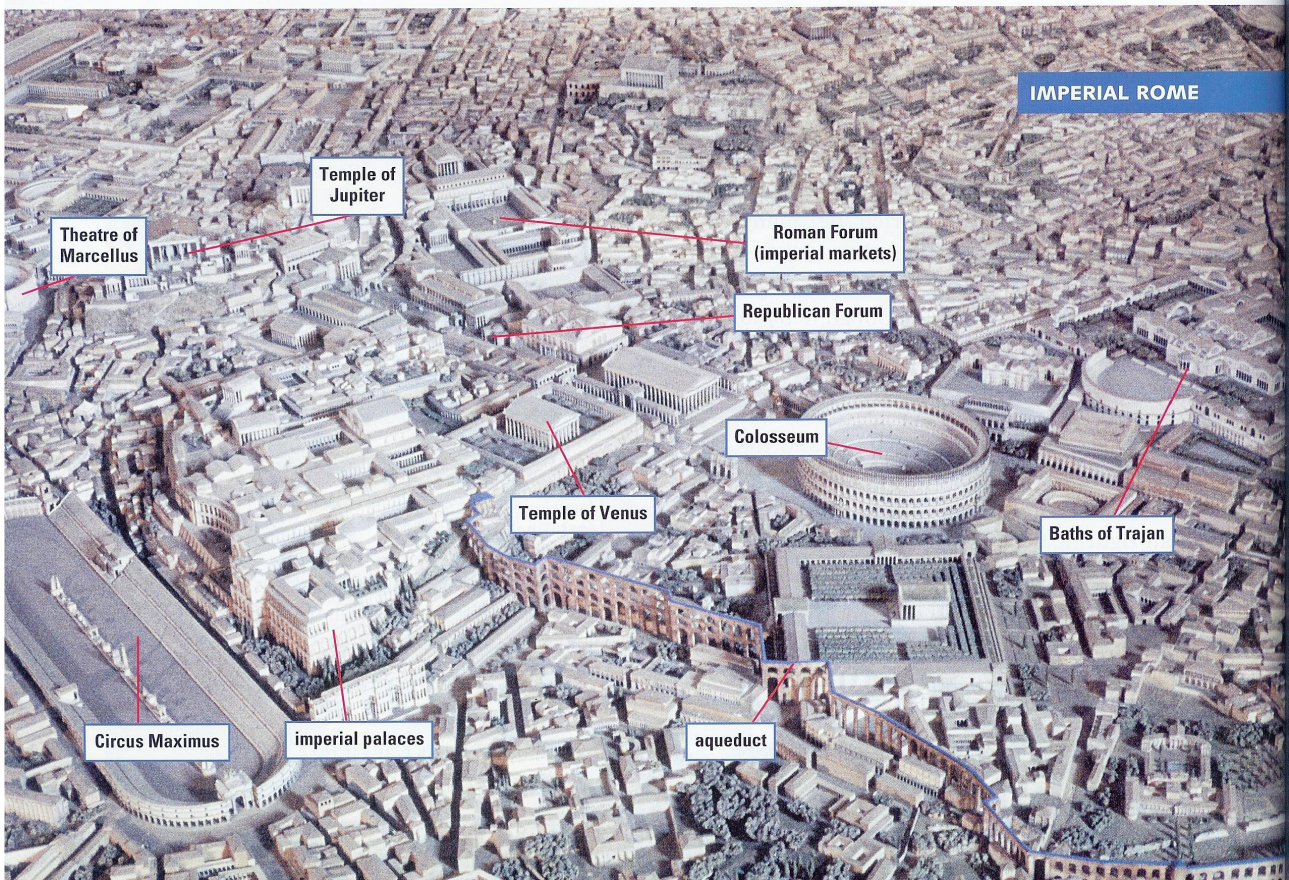
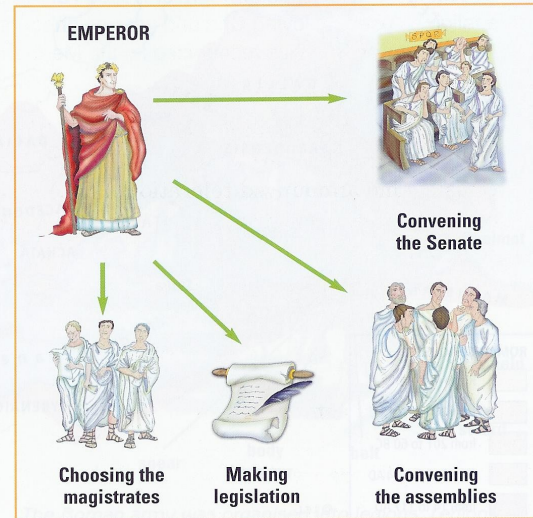
After Julius Caesar's death, his adopted son Octavius overcame his rivals. The Senate gave him the name Augustus ("chosen by the gods") and he was made **Emperor of Rome**.

Under Augustus' rule, a new form of government appeared in the Roman Empire. All civil and military powers were concentrated in the Emperor. The old institutions of the Republic had only symbolic power and the Emperor chose all government officials.

The Emperor also had religious authority. When Augustus died, he was deified, marking the beginning of the **Imperial cult**. From then on, emperors were seen as gods.

a Who was Octavius? Why did he become Augustus?

THE POWERS OF THE EMPEROR

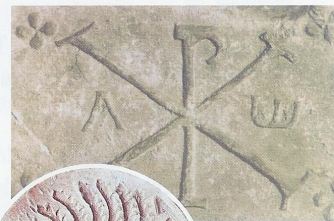


DISCOVER...

Christianity

Christianity began in Palestine during the rule of the Emperor Augustus. When he was 30 years old, Jesus of Nazareth began teaching a religion based on loving God and your neighbours. He called himself the Son of God and was recognised as the Messiah by his followers.

The authorities considered this new religion dangerous. As a result, Jesus was crucified. His followers began to expand Christianity across the Empire. In the 4th century, the Emperor Constantine announced toleration of Christianity. At the end of the century, Theodosius made it the Empire's official religion.



The fish and the anagram of Christ's name were symbols used by the first Christians.

3.2. THE PAX ROMANA

The 1st and 2nd centuries were a golden age for the Empire. This period is known as the Pax Romana. There were few wars and the conquered territory was Romanised.

The Roman territories were organised into provinces with individual governors. They were protected by forts along the boundaries of the Roman Empire (**limes**). In 212 AD, everyone living in the Empire was given **Roman citizenship** and the rights associated with it.

b What was the Pax Romana?

3.3. THE EMPIRE IN CRISIS

In the 3rd century, Rome stopped expanding and experienced a crisis. This was because of attacks by **Germanic peoples**, the weakening of imperial authority, military revolts and economic problems. The lack of slaves from newly conquered territories also caused a decrease in agricultural production and mining.

In 395 AD, the Emperor Theodosius divided the territory between his two sons. This was to make it easier to defend. The **Western Roman Empire** and the **Eastern Roman Empire** (or Byzantine Empire) were formed.

c How did Theodosius try to save the Empire?

QUICK REVISION

- Augustus created an empire in which power was concentrated in the emperor.
- The Golden Age of the Empire is known as the Pax Romana.
- In the 4th century, a profound crisis led to the division of the Empire.

ACTIVITIES

- 1 What were the three main powers of the Roman emperor?
- 2 Put the following events in chronological order.
 - a) The Empire experiences a crisis.
 - b) Christianity becomes the religion of the Empire.
 - c) The birth of Christ.
 - d) Those living in the territory are given Roman citizenship.
 - e) The Empire is divided into two territories.
 - f) Christianity is officially tolerated by Rome.



Look at the picture of Imperial Rome. Which building is being described?

4

Society and economy in the Roman Empire

4.1. URBAN SOCIETY

During the expansion of the Roman Empire, hundreds of **cities** were built. They all had a similar structure, with a central square (forum) and walls around the city.

There were many public buildings, including baths and theatres. The cities had sewerage systems and aqueducts to carry water to the cities.

The government authorities and the administrators lived in the cities, along with craftsmen and traders.

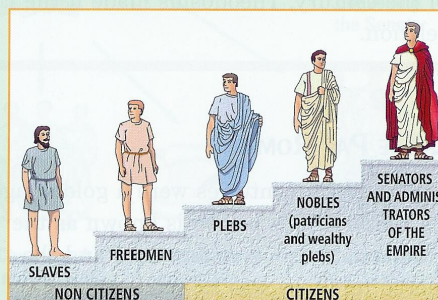
Cities were very important to the process of **Romanisation**. They became centres of Roman culture and helped spread the Roman language (Latin) and laws.

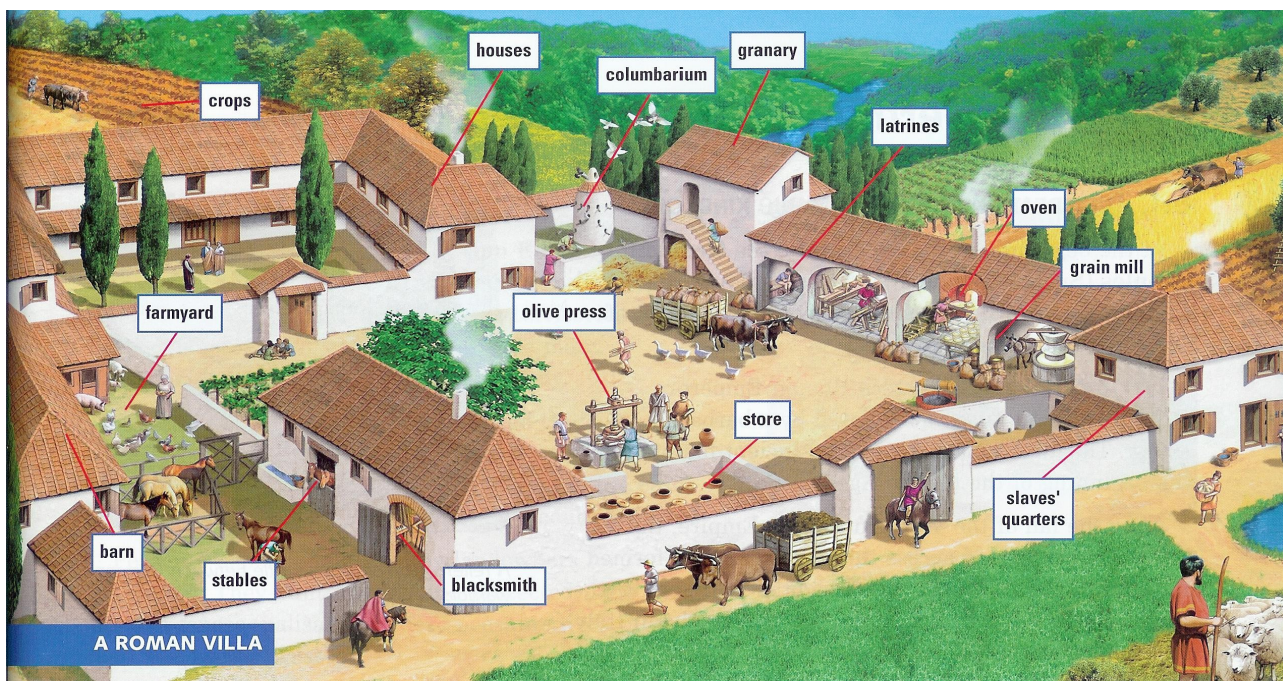
a How did cities contribute to Romanisation?

SOCIAL GROUPS IN THE EMPIRE

20

Most free men were **Roman citizens** (with political rights and the protection of the law). However, there was much inequality among citizens. **Nobles** were wealthy and had special privileges. Below the nobles were **craftsmen, peasants and urban plebs**. **Freedmen** (slaves who had obtained their freedom) and **slaves** were not citizens.





4.2. PROSPERITY IN AGRICULTURE AND TRADE

Agricultural activity became highly developed under the Empire. Innovations included the invention of ploughs, grain mills, olive and grape presses and new irrigation systems.

In **agricultural colonies**, peasants worked on the land to support themselves. **Latifundia** were large estates owned by wealthy landowners where slaves grew food for trade. Farming took place around **villas** in the country. The villa included the owner's house and other buildings.

Traders became wealthy under the Empire. Hispania exported wine, North Africa exported oil, Egypt exported wheat, Germania and the Baltic territories exported amber, furs and slaves. Products were also imported: ivory, gold, animals and slaves from Africa, and precious stones, silk and perfumes from India and China.

Rome was connected to the provinces in the Empire by a road network. However, trade was also conducted by ship. A single **currency** was used throughout Roman territory.

- b** How was agriculture organised under the Roman Empire?

Netsurfers

Find information about Roman villas. Make a fact file about the information that you find. Then compare your fact file with your classmates'. Look at the links in Netsurfers to help you.

www.vicensvives.net/netsurfers

4

LOOK

at the pictures of the city and the villa

- 1 What were the main buildings in a Roman city?
- 2 Describe the different areas in a Roman villa and explain their function.

ACTIVITIES

- 3 Which social groups existed in the Roman Empire?
- 4 Give examples of Roman innovations in agriculture.
- 5 What do you know about trade in the Roman Empire?